

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 COME-00 AGRE-00 IGA-02 AID-05
OPIC-03 OES-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /093 W
-----290901Z 019796 /17
R 290600Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3075

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 0486

AID FOR SER/CPS; MANAMA FOR DODSON; ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BGEN BAGB PINT MU
SUBJECT: MORE ON THE SHAKEUP IN DHOFAR

REF: MUSCAT 0463

1. FURTHER TO REFTTEL, AMBASSADOR RAISED SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER ZAWAWI MARCH 26 POINTING OUT THAT WHILE EMBASSY'S IN-
FORMATION IS SKETCHY IT SEEMS ONE OR MORE AMERICAN COMPANIES AS
WELL AS INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN EMPLOYEES IN DHOFAR WALI'S OFFICE
ARE AFFECTED. MADE CLEAR THIS BEING RAISED WITH ZAWAWI IN
HIS CAPACITY AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF OMAN'S DEVELOPMENT AND
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FINANCE COUNCILS, WHICH CLEARLY GIVES GSM GENERAL OVERSIGHT
BRIEF OVER ECONOMIC SCENE IN DHOFAR.

2. ZAWAWI STATED DGAT DHOFAR WALI, SHAIKH BREIK, WILL BE
RETURNING TO HIS POST IN SALALAH IN EARLY SUMMER. COMMUNI-
CATIONS MINISTER RAJAB HAS ASSUMED SHAIKH BREIK'S RESPONSI-
BILITIES DURING HIS LEAVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH OFFICIAL DECISION

ISSUED BY MINISTER OF DIWAN AFFAIRS FEBRUARY 24 UNDER ORDERS FROM THE SULTAN. ZAWAWI ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT ANY AMERICAN COMPANIES WHOSE EXISTING CONTRACTS WERE SIGNED BY WALI BREIK OR OTHER RESPONSIBLE DHOFAR OFFICIALS WOULD BE TREATED EQUITABLY DURING PRESENT ROUND OF CONTRACT RENEGOTIATIONS. SAID IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO THERE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PROPERLY COUNTERSIGNED BY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FINANCE IN MUSCAT, AS REQUIRED BY OMANI LAW, AND THEREFORE MAY REQUIRE REVIEW. AS TO PRIVATE AMERICANS EMPLOYED IN WALI'S OFFICE, ZAWAWI STATED EACH CASE WOULD BE HANDLED FAIRLY AND HE WOULD WELCOME OUR APPRISING HIM PERSONALLY SHOULD SOME INSTANCE ARISE CASTING DOUBT ON THIS.

3. ZAWAWI WAS AWARE OF RAJAB'S ONGOING CONTRACT REVIEW WITH AMERICAN FIRM OF MCGAUGHY, MARSHALL & MCMILLIAN WHOSE REPRESENTATIVES FROM ATHENS CURRENTLY IN MUSCAT, AND DOUBTED THERE WOULD BE ANY PROBLEM. (SUBSEQUENTLY, COMPANY'S VICE PRESIDENT, BRADFORD DALLAS, TOLD EMBASSY REP THAT INITIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH RAJAB HAD GONE ALL RIGHT AND HE BELIEVED THEIR EARLIER CONTRACTS WITH SHAIKH BREIK WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE CONFIRMED ALTHOUGH RAJAB WANTS TO CONSOLIDATE THEM INTO ONE.)

4. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED WITH ZAWAWI DISCUSSIONS OVER PAST MONTHS BETWEEN EMBOFFS AND REGIONAL AID REP DODSON AND OMANI OFFICIALS LOOKING TO SHORT-TERM WORK IN OMAN BY TWO-MAN TEAM ON CATTLE RANGE MANAGEMENT AND WATER RESOURCES, AND BY FISHERIES
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ADVISOR. POINTED OUT THAT BECAUSE OF RECENT TRANSFER OF DHOFAR AGRICULTURAL RESPONSIBILITIES FROM WALI'S OFFICE TO MINAGRICULTURE, THE TWO-MAN CATTLE AND WATER TEAM WILL WORK WITH MINAG ALTHOUGH EARLIER DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN WITH HORGEN OF WALI'S OFFICE. ZAWAWI WELCOMED THESE PROGRAMS AND SAID EMBASSY SHOULD CONTINUE INFORMING FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ABOUT SUCH INITIATIVES. IN FUTURE, HE ASKED THAT WE ALSO KEEP DR. SHARIF LOTFY, SECGEN OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING COUNCIL, IN THE PICTURE.

5. COMMENT: SITUATION BEARS WATCHING. SO FAR IT ADDS UP TO CONCERTED MOVE BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO ASSERT FULLER AUTHORITY IN HERETOFORE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS DHOFAR PROVINCE, WITH RAJAB FORCING THE PACE. THE OPERATION ASSUREDLY HAD SULTAN'S BLESSING. QABOOS MAY HAVE SENSED THAT DHOFAR'S SEMI-INDEPENDENCE IN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL HAD BECOME OUTMODED AND WAS INCONSISTENT (ESPECIALLY IN PEACETIME) WITH HIS GENERAL POLICY OF PROMOTING CONCEPT OF UNITY IN OMAN. COULD ALSO BE THAT CUTTING WALI'S AUTHORITY DOWN TO SIZE AND ENHANCING

MINISTERIAL AUTHORITY WAS VIEWED AS GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS
TACTIC IN PREPARING TO HOLD MAIN NATIONAL DAY CEREMONIES
NEXT NOVEMBER IN SALALAH RATHER THAN MUSCAT FOR FIRST TIME
IN QABOOS' REIGN.
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